

# NEWTON FAIR HOUSING COMMITTEE

Newton Housing & Community Development Program  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, MA 02459. Phone 617-796-1156. TDD/TTY 617-796-7089

## October 6, 2010 Meeting Minutes

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**Fair Housing Committee members in attendance:** Sheila Mondschein (Chair), Phil Herr, Josephine McNeil, Susan Paley, Esther Schlorholtz, Doug Sweet

**Fair Housing Committee members absent:** Nadine Cohen, Henry Korman

**Staff:** Trisha Guditiz, Robert Muollo, Jr.

**Guests:** Keisha Willis

### **Materials Distributed to Members:**

- October Agenda
  - Draft September Minutes
  - "Local Preference Policy Appendix C, revised 9.29.10"
  - "Proposed Language for Appendix C Accessibility (email)"
  - FY11 Work Plan (draft)
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The meeting came to order at 8:07 a.m.

### **1) Review and approval of September minutes**

The following revisions were made on the draft September minutes:

"Briefly discussed regarding further revision" was added to agenda item 4.  
"Considering a higher standard of accessibility for homeownerships receiving federal assistance" was added to item 3 with other language removed. The minutes were approved as revised.

**2) Status reports (Working group on Accessibility in Affordable Housing; Arch. Access Consultant report distribution; FHC membership; Section 8 landlord program; other matters)**

An update was provided on the last Working group on Accessibility in Affordable Housing meeting. That meeting included discussion on providing incentives for developers, assessing the need for accessibility and how the policy would work in practice. Two members of the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities (MCPD) will attend City Development Review Team meetings for housing development projects seeking public funds.

The final accessibility in affordable housing guidelines was read to the FHC members. Doug suggested that all developers should be encouraged by the City to produce more accessible housing, not just projects receiving public funding.

Regarding the architectural access report, the consultant is meeting next with housing providers. After interviews with City Department Heads and staff, the consultant identified gaps regarding technical expertise, communication between departments and technical information from department staff. Trisha believed that the report will produce recommendations that could translate into a workplan.

The upcoming process and timing for a draft was then discussed. It was agreed that after the draft report is reviewed by staff, the FHC and the MCPD, a public meeting should be held to draw attention and exposure to the draft report. An executive summary should also be provided for that public meeting. The public meeting would be on a Thursday night, date to be determined.

Regarding the final report, the FHC agreed that they prefer to review the report first and then make decisions about distribution.

Regarding FHC membership, Girard will be appointed on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. A letter will be sent from the Mayor to the Board of Aldermen. Sheila said that the committee can make two additional appointments.

Regarding the Landlord Resource Fair, Robert said it will be held on October 28 at 6:30 p.m. at Lasell College. Sheila asked what the total cost to the FHC would be. Robert said around \$800 for mailing and printing expenses.

Other matters:

The FHC agreed that they would have the November meeting in Sheila's absence. The meeting would be held on November 3<sup>rd</sup> with Susan presiding as chairperson.

Josephine suggested that a disclaimer be added in the chairperson's monthly meeting review memo to the Mayor stating that the memo's content is the perception of the chair and not necessarily that of the entire committee. This was agreed upon by the FHC.

### **3) Discussion of work plan activities for the current year**

Sheila suggested that because nothing has been issued regarding the availability of the Fair Housing Initiatives Program Grant, the FHC should focus instead on using CDBG funds for work plan activities.

It was suggested that the workplan focus on: a public information campaign - broken up into a series of events and types of information; disability rights and education on the complaint process; a training program for city and housing officials; actions on the architectural access report by the consultant; and training for housing and service providers on how to report fair housing complaints.

It was also suggested that the FHC be trained on certain laws, regulations and state policies. Trainings should also include education on landlord accountability.

### **4) Discussion of proposed language revision to Appendix C regarding local residency selection preferences, and any revisions needed on applicability**

The FHC agreed that local residency selection preferences would be triggered when a lottery is used for unit distribution and therefore 'waiting list' should be removed from pages one and page two of the document. Also, the language 'upon turnover' [for rental units] and 'Appendix C' should also be removed from the document. The document now stands alone as the City's local residency selection preference policy.

The FHC agreed to these proposed changes as well as the revised language submitted by Henry concerning distribution of accessible units.

## **5) Possible consideration of Chapter 40B event sponsorship**

The FHC agreed to not co-sponsor an event regarding the ballot question on Chapter 40B due to the advocacy nature of that event and following discussion with the City Solicitor's office.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 a.m.